

Message Text

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM MADRID DTD 16 FEB 1978 QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 01739

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: RFE/RL TRANSMITTERS

REF: STATE 033655

1. I DISCUSSED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA ON FEB. 16 RADIO LIBERTY (RL) OPERATIONS IN SPAIN. I OUTLINED TO HIM OPTION ONE AND EXPLAINED THE REASON WHY WE WERE ANXIOUS TO HAVE NEW TRANSMITTERS IN SPAIN AND A LONG TERM AGREEMENT. I TOLD HIM WHAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE WAY OF CONSTRUCTION AND THE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BENEFITS THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO SPAIN AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AT PALS. I REMINDED OREJA OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS ATTACHED TO THE RL OPERATION AND SAID THAT IN FORTHCOMING BUDGET HEARINGS ON RFE/RL THERE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISCUSSIONS ON THE SPANISH OPERATION.

2. OREJA SAID THAT WHILE HE WOULD OF COURSE BE WILLING
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TO TAKE UP OPTION ONE WITH THE GOVERNMENT, HE FRANKLY FELT THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO DO SO SINCE IT COULD BRING ABOUT A FULL SCALE DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF RL IN SPAIN. IN THIS CONNECTION HE RECALLED THE DECISION THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE GOS OVER FOUR YEARS AGO WHEN HE HAD BEEN INFORMATION UNDER SECRETARY, TO SEEK A CLOSING OUT OF RL. HE FEARED THAT SOME MINISTERS MIGHT

WANT TO PRESS FOR CLOSURE.

3. I THEN ASKED OREJA WHETHER OPTION TWO WOULD NOT OFFER A WAY AROUND THIS SINCE WE WOULD NOT BE ASKING FOR LONG TERM AGREEMENT AT THIS TIME BUT RATHER AN UNDERSTANDING THAT AT SOME POINT WE WOULD AGREE TO NEGOTIATE A LONG TERM AGREEMENT. I POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THIS OPTION WE WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN CONCURRENCE FROM APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES BUT WE COULD ONLY DO THIS IF THE GOS AGREED THAT THIS WAS A VIABLE OPTION. OREJA INQUIRED AS TO WHETHER UNDER THHS OPTION THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEW TRANSMITTERS WAS LIKELY TO BECOME PUBLIC. I REPLIED THAT I THOUGHT THERE WAS LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS COULD BE KEPT QUIET SINCE QUITE A FEW PEOPLE WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE INSTALLATION.

4. OREJA SAID THA HE WOULD STRONGLY URGE US TO LEAVE MATTERS AS THEY NOW STAND. HE SAW NO DIFFICULTY IN RL CONTINUING TO OPERATE AT PALS WITHOUT AGREEMENT. HE WAS PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR US OFFICIALLY TO SEEK ANY CHANGE IN THE PRESENT TACIT ARRANGEMENT. HOWEVER, HE REITERATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS FORMALLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT EITHER OPTION ONE OR OPTION TWO IF THAT WAS WHAT WE DESIRED.

5. I THANKED OREJA FOR HIS ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION
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WHICH I SAID I WOULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON. I PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO FOLLOW HIS ADVICE AND LET MATTERS REMAIN WHERE THEY ARE NOW. HOWEVER, SHOULD IT BE DETERMINED THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THE QUESTION FURTHER, I WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH HHM.

6. COMMENT. THE DISCUSSION CAME OUT PRETTY MUCH AS I EXPECTED IT WOULD. ALTHOUGH I WOULD OF COURSE BE WILLING TO GO BACK TO OREJA TO ASK HIM FOR AN OFFICIAL GOS REE ACTION TO EITHER OPTION ONE OR TWO, I DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS COURSE OF ACTION. I REALIZE THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING ADDITIONAL TRANSMITTERS AT PALS BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF LETTING PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS STAND. STABLER UNQTE VANCE

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